



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# News Release

August 18, 2006

## **Immigration fraudster sentenced to 96 months in prison following an ICE investigation**

MIAMI- Julie L. Myers, Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, and Emilio T. Gonzalez, Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), announced that defendant Gomez Accime was sentenced today to a term of ninety-six (96) months in prison and three years of supervised release. Co-defendant, The Haitian-American Community Help Organization of South Florida, Inc. (HACHO), was previously sentenced on June 28, 2006, to three years' probation, and was ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine.

On July 19, 2005, a grand jury returned a seven count indictment charging Gomez Accime with conspiracy to commit mail fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371; mail fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341; and presenting false applications for employment authorization, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1546(a). A superseding indictment was returned on December 22, 2005, adding forfeiture allegations. HACHO was charged with conspiracy to commit mail fraud and presenting false application for employment authorization. After a seven-day trial, on March 15, 2006, a jury convicted Gomez Accime of two counts of counts of mail fraud and two counts of presenting false applications for employment authorization. HACHO was convicted of three counts of presenting false applications for employment authorization. Both defendants were acquitted of the conspiracy charge.

Gomez Accime was the executive director of HACHO, an organization that represented to the general public that it was able to obtain employment authorization and other immigration benefits for aliens already in the United States. HACHO then submitted fraudulent immigration applications for employment authorization (Form I-765) on behalf of aliens from Africa, the Caribbean, including citizens from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Haiti, and Europe for a fee of four hundred and fifty dollars (\$450.00) per applicant. These forms were submitted without regard to the applicants' eligibility status. HACHO falsely represented on the applications that the aliens applying for employment authorization were either refugees or employed as domestic or personal servants. In addition, HACHO collected the \$450 fee from all applicants even though the USCIS waived the one hundred and seventy-five dollar (\$175) filing fee for applicants who were refugees. HACHO submitted more than 10,000 fraudulent applications and received in excess of \$3 million from the applicants.

"This sentence underscores not only the severity of the crime of benefit fraud, but also the vigor with which ICE will approach these cases," said ICE Assistant Secretary Julie L. Myers. "Working

in partnership with other law enforcement agencies, such as we do on document and benefits fraud task forces around the country, we are identifying fraud schemes and shutting them down.”

United States Attorney Acosta stated, “Immigrants looking for guidance fell prey to this unscrupulous individual, who corrupted our immigration system for personal profit. Today’s sentence makes clear that we will vigorously investigate and prosecute those who seek to defraud our immigration system for personal gain.”

“This indictment is a by-product of the new joint anti-fraud partnership between ICE and the USCIS,” said Director Emilio T. Gonzalez. “USCIS’s new Office of Fraud Detection and National Security identified over 10,000 fraudulent applications for employment authorization that were filed by HACHO. USCIS and ICE worked very closely throughout the investigation. Other fraudsters should take notice that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is serious about combating immigration benefit fraud.”

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of ICE and USCIS. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jennifer Keene and Laurence Bardfeld.

**# ICE #**

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*